

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed on August 21, 2009, has been received and its contents carefully considered. Additionally attached to this Amendment is a Petition for One-Month Extension of Time, extending the period for response to December 22, 2009, being the next working day in the District of Columbia.

Claims 21-25 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 21, 22 and 23 and the Specification are amended and claims 24 and 25 are added. Support for the added claims may be found on page 24, lines 15-25, page 25, lines 9-18, Fig. 10 and Fig. 11 of the disclosure of this application. Claims 1-20 are canceled. Claim 21 is independent. Reconsideration of this application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

The Office Action objects to the Drawings on multiple grounds. First, the Office Action asserts that numerals 5 and above correspond to differing elements. Figs. 2 and 3, and the Specification are amended to obviate this objection.

Second, the Office Action objects to the cross hatching applied to element 19 in Fig. 3. Fig. 3 is amended to obviate this objection. Third, the Office Action asserts that the reference numeral C2 appears in the Specification, but not in the Drawings. Reference to numeral C2 is removed to obviate this objection. In view of the above, withdrawal of the pending objection to the Drawings is respectfully requested.

The Office Action objects to the Specification. The Specification is amended to obviate this objection. Support for the amendment including citation of DE-3730393 may be found in the "Foreign Patent Documents" section of the Information

Disclosure Statement filed on August 24, 2006. Withdrawal of the pending objection to the Specification is thus respectfully requested.

The Office Action objects to the Abstract for being too long. The Abstract is amended to below 150 words to obviate this objection. Withdrawal of the objection to the Abstract is thus respectfully requested.

The Office Action objects to claim 21 for an informality, and objects to claims 17 and 18 as duplicating subject matter recited in claims 19 and 20. Claim 21 is amended to obviate this objection, and the cancellation of claims 17 and 18 renders the above objection moot with respect to those claims. Withdrawal of the objection to claim 21 is thus respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-23 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. The cancellation of claims 1-20 renders the above rejection moot with respect to those claims. Specifically, the Office Action asserts that the disclosure of this application fails to describe an "elastic restoring force." However, such features are disclosed by way of example on page 1, lines 15-25, page 2, lines 1-19, page 16, lines 17-25 and page 17, lines 1-6 of this application. Here, an exemplary structure that allows deformation including bending is discussed. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that such features are disclosed in enabling fashion.

Further, the Office Action rejects claims 17, 18, 22 and 23 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as indefinite. Specifically, the Office Action asserts that the term "central angle" in the above noted claims is indefinite. Claims 22 and 23 are

amended to overcome this rejection, and support for the amendments to these claims may be found on page 23, lines 10-23 and in Fig. 9 of the disclosure of this application. The cancellation of claims 17 and 18 renders the above rejection moot with respect to those claims.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the pending rejections under §112 are thus respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 10 and 14-20 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,038,941 to *Hobaugh et al.*, and rejects claims 1-4, 14, 17 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) as being anticipated by WO 2004/106758 to *Zernickel*. However, the cancellation of claims 1-20 renders the above rejections moot.

In view of the above, none of the applied references can reasonably be considered to disclose or to suggest the combination of all of the features recited in claim 21, as discussed above. Claims 22-25 are also allowable, at least for their dependence on allowable independent claim 1, as well as for the separately patentable subject matter recited in those claims.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the pending rejections under §102 are respectfully requested.

It is submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Such action and the passing of this case to issue are requested.

Should the Examiner feel that a conference would help to expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is hereby invited to contact the undersigned counsel to arrange for such an interview.

An extension fee is submitted herewith. However, should any additional fee be required, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge the fee to our Deposit Account No. 18-0002, and advise us accordingly.

Respectfully submitted,



December 22, 2009
Date

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RHB/ARK/pq
Attachments:

Replacement Sheets (Figs. 2 and 3)
Replace Abstract (clean copy)